

*Research Article*

## What Really Builds Competitive Advantage in Creative Culinary MSMEs? The Dominance of Operational Capabilities

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### Abstract

This study analyzes the influence of entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities on competitive advantage among coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City. Increasing competition in the culinary industry, particularly the food and beverage sector, encourages MSMEs to develop effective strategies to sustain competitiveness. The research employed a quantitative approach using questionnaire data collected from coffee shop MSME owners in Bekasi City. Data analysis included multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and correlation analysis. The results indicate that entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities positively and significantly affect competitive advantage. However, operational capability demonstrates a stronger influence than entrepreneurial marketing. This finding suggests that competitive advantage in the coffee shop industry depends not only on marketing creativity but also on operational consistency, service quality, efficiency, and the ability to meet customer expectations. Consumers place greater value on product quality and service experience, making operational excellence a critical factor for long-term competitiveness. The study highlights a shift in MSME competitive strategies from marketing orientation toward stronger operational capability development. Therefore, coffee shop MSMEs should strengthen internal operational systems, employee competence, and service efficiency while continuing innovative marketing efforts to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Marketing, Operational Capabilities, Competitive Advantage, MSMEs, Coffee Shop.

JEL Classification: L66, D22, M11

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### 1. Introduction

Bekasi City presents more than a descriptive case of MSME growth; it offers a theoretically important laboratory for examining how firms sustain competitive advantage under conditions of market saturation, resource limitation, and intense competitive pressure. Although MSMEs dominate the business structure in Bekasi, accounting for more than 99% of total businesses, prior studies have largely treated MSMEs as homogeneous economic actors and focused primarily on descriptive growth indicators rather than explaining the strategic mechanisms that enable firms to survive and differentiate themselves in highly competitive environments.

In particular, the rapid expansion of approximately 1,300 coffee shop outlets in Bekasi creates a dynamic context in which competitive advantage no longer depends solely on market growth, but instead on the ability of firms to integrate entrepreneurial behavior with operational excellence.

From a theoretical perspective, previous studies have generally examined entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities separately. Entrepreneurial marketing research emphasizes innovation, opportunity recognition, proactiveness, and risk-taking as drivers of business growth and market responsiveness. Meanwhile, operational capability studies focus on efficiency, service consistency, quality control, and resource utilization as determinants of organizational performance. However, limited research explains how these two strategic capabilities interact simultaneously to generate sustainable competitive advantage, particularly in MSMEs operating in creative and service-intensive industries such as coffee shops. This creates a theoretical gap because competitive advantage in highly saturated markets is unlikely to emerge from marketing creativity or operational efficiency alone, but rather from their integration.

Bekasi is therefore an interesting empirical setting because it reflects the paradox faced by many urban MSMEs in emerging economies: high market opportunities coexist with high business vulnerability. The coffee shop industry in Bekasi operates in a highly competitive ecosystem characterized by low entry barriers, rapidly changing consumer preferences, digitalized consumer behavior, and increasing pressure to differentiate products and improve service quality. Under these conditions, MSMEs must continuously innovate in marketing while simultaneously maintaining operational consistency despite limited resources. This situation provides an opportunity to test the Resource-Based View (RBV) and capability-based theories in the context of MSMEs, particularly regarding whether entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities function as complementary strategic resources in creating sustainable competitive advantage.

Therefore, this study does not merely describe the growth of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi, but conceptually investigates how entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities contribute to competitive advantage in a highly competitive urban MSME environment. By focusing on the interaction between strategic marketing behavior and operational capability, this research aims to address a theoretical gap in the MSME competitiveness literature and to provide a deeper understanding of how small businesses build sustainable competitive advantage in emerging market contexts.

## 2. Literature Review and Hypothesis

### Competitive Advantage

State that competitive advantage is a strategy to outperform competitors. Competitive advantage is the heart of marketing performance in the face of competition. Raeni Dwi Santy (2018) argues that "competitive advantage cannot be understood by looking at a company as a whole, but has a competitive advantage originating from various activities carried out by the company in designing, producing, marketing, delivering, and supporting its products.

### Entrepreneurship Marketing

The concept of entrepreneurial marketing explains how decision-makers can optimize limited resources to address various business problems effectively. In this context, innovation is the implementation of new ideas into concrete practices that provide added value to consumers. Entrepreneurial marketing is also seen as the result of an entrepreneurial interpretation of information, manifested in adaptive decision-making and marketing actions. Furthermore, entrepreneurial marketing reflects the spirit, orientation, and process of pursuing opportunities and creating and developing businesses through innovation, creativity, networking, and flexibility. Thus, entrepreneurial marketing has a different level of complexity and approach compared to traditional marketing concepts (Hadiyati, 2010; Kraus et al., 2009; Morrish et al., 2010).

### **Operational Capabilities**

Operational capabilities are the skills and knowledge that enable a business to be an efficient and flexible producer or provider of services, utilizing its resources to the fullest. Operational capabilities are fundamentally based on standardized processes and established systems. Additionally, businesses use business process engineering, redesign of business systems and workflows, or information technology to improve efficiency. Consulting firms often recommend this approach. In some specific industries, operational capabilities are more important than other capabilities.

### **Relationship between variables**

#### **Entrepreneurial Marketing and Competitive Advantage**

The relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and competitive advantage is multifaceted and depends on factors such as contextual nuances, business type, and market dynamics. Entrepreneurial marketing, embedded in innovation, offers a competitive advantage by emphasizing new approaches. However, the impact of marketing dimensions on performance is not uniform, as evidenced by research showing variable significance across dimensions, with some dimensions exerting a stronger influence on the performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

Empirical research highlights the distinct nature of this relationship, revealing that certain aspects of marketing entrepreneurship, such as opportunity-focused activities and resource utilization, can enhance competitive advantage, whereas others may not. The intricacies of this relationship are further exemplified in specific sectoral studies, such as those in the banking sector, where, although marketing entrepreneurship can enhance competitive advantage, its impact on overall performance is not always positive, particularly in resource-constrained sectors such as small tourism and hospitality organizations. In short, the interaction between marketing entrepreneurship and Competitive advantage is complex and context-dependent. While marketing entrepreneurship has the potential to foster competitive advantage through innovation and risk management, its impact varies across dimensions and industries, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of contextual factors and market conditions. This is reinforced by research conducted by Hidayatullah et al. (2019), and Makmur et al. (2017). The results show that marketing entrepreneurship influences marketing performance due to its role in competitive advantage.

#### **Operational Capabilities and Excellence Compete**

The relationship between operational capabilities and competitive advantage is complex and dependent on many factors, including contextual nuances, business typology, and existing market conditions. Operational capabilities, which demonstrate a company's ability to manage resources and processes to achieve operational goals, intersect with competitive advantage, which demonstrates a company's ability to offer differentiated benefits, thereby creating superior value compared to competitors. Although empirical evidence underscores the potential of operational capabilities to improve the performance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the significance of each dimension varies, with some exerting a greater influence on performance outcomes than others. This research is supported by Winata (2021) and Dhameria et al. (2021), who stated that entrepreneurial networking and marketing capabilities are important factors that significantly influence MSMEs' competitive advantage.

## **3. Data and Method**

### **Time and Location of Research**

This research was conducted over six months, from November 2023 to April 2024. The selected subjects were coffee shops in Bekasi City. The research was conducted on MSME coffee shop entrepreneurs in Bekasi City.

### **Research Design**

Arifin (2020) states that research using survey and experimental approaches is part of quantitative research. The methods used include experiments and surveys to determine the influence of

independent and dependent variables, which will then be processed using an associative quantitative approach. In other words, this approach seeks relationships between variables, in this case, "The Influence of Entrepreneurial Marketing and Operational Capabilities on Increasing the Competitive Advantage of Micro-Entrepreneurs in the Creative Industry in the Food and Beverage Sub-Sector (Case Study of Coffee Shops in Bekasi City)." The survey method involved distributing forms to all parties within the research scope. Furthermore, the time horizon used in this study was cross-sectional because the research on the influence between the independent and dependent variables was conducted at a single point in time.

### Research Measurement

The scale used in this study was the Likert scale. The Likert scale, with its categories Strongly Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, is often used to measure attitudes toward positive and negative statements.

### Population and Sample

The population selected by the researchers in this study was MSMEs in the food and beverage sector in Bekasi City. This population was selected from all coffee shop businesses in Bekasi City, based on business permit data, totaling approximately 1,300 outlets.

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a common sampling technique used in scientific research. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique that involves selecting units based on specific criteria. The reason for using purposive sampling is that the researcher specifically examined coffee shop businesses in Bekasi City, calculated using the Slovin formula. Based on the formula above, a sample of 93 respondents was obtained.

### Data Types and Data Scales

The data used in this study are quantitative, i.e., numerical. The quantitative data used in this study are the questionnaire responses from coffee shop business owners in Bekasi City.

### Instrument Test

A measuring instrument can be considered a good one capable of providing clear and accurate information if it meets the criteria set by experts, namely validity and reliability. The tests used to assess the instrument's quality are validity and reliability tests.

## 4. Results

### Validity Test

**Table 1. Validity Test**

No Question	r Count	Sig.	r Table	Note:
1	0.2039	0,000	0.716	Valid
2	0.2039	0,000	0.727	Valid
3	0.2039	0,000	0.718	Valid
4	0.2039	0,000	0.732	Valid
5	0.2039	0,000	0.591	Valid
6	0.2039	0,000	0.708	Valid
7	0.2039	0,000	0.694	Valid
8	0.2039	0,000	0.727	Valid
9	0.2039	0,000	0.738	Valid
10	0.2039	0,000	0.779	Valid

Source: Processed Data (2024)

**Reliability Test****Table 2. Reliability Test**

No	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Information
1	Entrepreneurship Marketing (X1)	0.931	Reliable
2	Operational Capability (X2)	0.920	Reliable
3	Competitive Advantage (Y)	0.935	Reliable

Source: Processed Data (2024)

From Table 2, it can be seen that Cronbach's Alpha values for all variables exceed 0.60, indicating that the statement instrument is reliable.

**Classical Assumption Test  
Normality Test****Table 3. Normality Test**

<b>One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Unstandardized Residual</b>	
N	93
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	
Mean	.0000000
Std. Deviation	2.88139748
Most Extreme Differences	
Absolute	.105
Positive	.079
Negative	-.105
Test Statistic	.105
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.013 <sup>c</sup>
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	.239 <sup>d</sup>
99% Confidence Interval	.228
Lower Bound	

From Table 3 above, asymp.sig (2-tailed) shows a value of  $0.013 < 0.05$ . From these results, the data are not normally distributed, so this study uses an alternative method, namely the Monte Carlo method. After conducting a normality test with the Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) model, the value is  $0.110 > 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that the residuals or research data are normally distributed.

**Heteroscedasticity Test****Table 4. Heteroscedasticity Test**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.669	3.003		2.887	.005
TOTALX1	-.074	.061	.218	-1.227	.223
TOTALX2	-.018	.086	.036	-.203	.840

The results of the test calculations show that the sig value of 0.223 is greater ( $>$ ) 0.05, and the sig value of 0.840 is also greater ( $>$ ) 0.05, indicating that there are no signs of heteroscedasticity in this regression model.

**Multicollinearity Test****Table 5. Multicollinearity Test**

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>	
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	X1	.331	3,024
	X2	.331	3,024

Based on Table 5 above, the test results indicate that all variables have VIF values <10 and tolerance values >0.10. This means there is no correlation among the independent variables, so all variables in the model are not affected by multicollinearity.

**Correlation Test****Table 6. Correlation Test**

Variable	Statistic	TOTALX1	TOTALX2	TOTALY
TOTALX1	Pearson	1	.818**	.733**
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	93	93	93
TOTALX2	Pearson	.818**	1	.813**
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	93	93	93
TOTALY	Pearson	.733**	.813**	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	93	93	93
Variable	Statistic	TOTALX1	TOTALX2	TOTALY
TOTALX1	Pearson	1	.818**	.733**
	Correlation			

Based on the analysis results, the significance value for the relationship between Entrepreneurial Marketing (X1) and Competitive Advantage (Y) is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship. The same thing also occurs in Operational Capability (X2) on Competitive Advantage (Y), with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , indicating a significant relationship between the two. In addition, the calculated r values for Entrepreneurial Marketing (0.733) and Operational Capability (0.813) are both greater than the r-table value of 0.2017, indicating a strong correlation. The positive correlation indicates that the greater the application of entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities, the greater the competitive advantage of business actors.

**Hypothesis Testing****t-test****Table 7. t-test**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
	Coefficient		Coefficient		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-2.306	2.849		.809	.420
TOTALX1	.245	.090	.283	2.733	.008
TOTALX2	.733	.116	.651	6.298	.000

Based on Table 7 above, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This is evident from the calculated F value of 235.498. At the same time, the resulting significance value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the multiple regression model [YP1.1] is suitable, and that the independent variables, including Entrepreneurial Marketing and operational capabilities, have a simultaneous influence on the dependent variable, namely Competitive Advantage.

#### f test

**Table 8. F-test**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4527.789	2	2263.498	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	865.192	90	9.613	
	Total	5392.989	92		

Based on Table 8 above, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. This is evident from the calculated F value of 235.498. Meanwhile, the resulting significance value is 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that this multiple regression model is suitable, and the independent variables, including Entrepreneurial Marketing and operational capabilities, have a simultaneous influence on the dependent variable, namely Competitive Advantage.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities are important strategic factors in shaping the competitive advantage of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City. More importantly, the results indicate that resource availability does not merely determine competitive advantage, but rather how MSMEs utilize, integrate, and transform those resources into adaptive business strategies. This finding supports the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasize that sustainable competitive advantage arises from valuable organizational capabilities that are difficult for competitors to imitate.

### The Influence of Entrepreneurial Marketing on Competitive Advantage

The positive influence of entrepreneurial marketing on competitive advantage indicates that coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi increasingly rely on innovation, adaptability, and opportunity-seeking behavior to survive in a highly saturated market. In the coffee shop industry, competition no longer occurs solely through price, but also through customer experience, branding, digital engagement, and product differentiation. Entrepreneurial marketing enables MSMEs to respond quickly to changing consumer preferences, social media trends, and lifestyle-oriented consumption patterns.

The underlying mechanism explaining this relationship lies in entrepreneurial marketing's ability to create market responsiveness and emotional value for customers. MSMEs that actively develop creative promotional strategies, leverage digital platforms, build customer relationships, and introduce product innovations are better able to differentiate themselves from competitors. This differentiation becomes a strategic intangible asset that strengthens customer loyalty and market positioning. In the context of RBV, entrepreneurial marketing is an intangible organizational resource that is valuable and difficult to replicate, as it depends on creativity, entrepreneurial orientation, and business flexibility.

From the Dynamic Capabilities perspective, entrepreneurial marketing also reflects the firm's ability to sense and seize market opportunities under uncertain business conditions. Coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi operate in an environment characterized by rapidly changing consumer trends and low entry barriers. Therefore, businesses that can continuously adapt their marketing approaches are more likely to sustain a competitive advantage than those relying solely on traditional promotional strategies.

Managerially, these findings imply that MSME owners should not focus only on short-term sales activities but also on developing adaptive marketing capabilities. Coffee shop businesses need to strengthen digital marketing skills, customer engagement strategies, product innovation, and collaboration networks to maintain relevance in increasingly competitive markets. Entrepreneurial marketing should therefore be viewed as a long-term strategic capability rather than merely a promotional activity.

### **The Influence of Operational Capabilities on Competitive Advantage**

The significant influence of operational capabilities on competitive advantage underscores the importance of operational excellence in determining MSME sustainability. While entrepreneurial marketing attracts customers, operational capabilities determine whether businesses can consistently deliver value and maintain customer satisfaction. In coffee shop businesses, operational consistency encompasses product quality, service speed, inventory management, workflow efficiency, and standardized customer experience.

Efficiency and reliability can explain the mechanism underlying this relationship. Businesses with strong operational capabilities can optimize resource utilization, reduce operational errors, maintain service consistency, and improve responsiveness to customer demand. These operational strengths indirectly enhance customer trust and satisfaction, thereby contributing to competitive advantage. In highly competitive markets such as Bekasi, customers are not only attracted by innovation but also by consistent service quality and operational reliability.

From the RBV perspective, operational capabilities function as organizational competencies embedded in routines, systems, and accumulated business experience. These capabilities become difficult for competitors to imitate because they develop through continuous organizational learning and process improvement. Dynamic Capabilities Theory further explains that operational capabilities must remain flexible and adaptive. Coffee shop MSMEs must continuously adjust operational systems according to changing market trends, digital ordering systems, customer expectations, and competitive pressures.

The managerial implication is that MSME actors should invest not only in marketing innovation but also in strengthening internal operational systems. Business owners need to improve employee competencies, workflow management, quality control, and technology use to ensure efficient, consistent service delivery. Operational capability development is especially important for MSMEs, as limited resources require them to maximize efficiency while maintaining service quality.

### **Entrepreneurial Marketing and Operational Capability Simultaneously Influence Competitive Advantage**

Based on the results of the F test, with the calculated F value (235.498) > Ftable (3.10), the entrepreneurial marketing variables (X1) and operational capabilities (X2) simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on the Competitive Advantage variable (Y). Therefore, the hypothesis "Entrepreneurial Marketing and operational capabilities simultaneously have an effect on Competitive Advantage" is accepted.

This finding is particularly relevant in the Bekasi coffee shop industry, where competition is increasingly intense and consumer expectations continue to evolve. MSMEs that fail to balance innovation and operational consistency may struggle to survive despite having strong products or attractive marketing strategies. Therefore, sustainable competitive advantage emerges not from isolated capabilities, but from the synergy between adaptive marketing orientation and operational effectiveness.

From a managerial perspective, MSME owners should adopt an integrated business development strategy. Business sustainability requires balancing creativity and operational discipline simultaneously. Policymakers and MSME development institutions should also design training

programs that combine entrepreneurial marketing competencies with operational management skills, enabling MSMEs to build more sustainable and resilient competitive advantages in dynamic urban markets.

Which demonstrated that entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities jointly influence competitive advantage. Therefore, the better developed entrepreneurial marketing and operational capabilities are, the greater the competitive advantage of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City.

## 6. Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on MSME competitiveness by demonstrating that entrepreneurial marketing and operational capability are important strategic capabilities that influence the competitive advantage of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City. The findings show that entrepreneurial marketing has a positive and significant effect on competitive advantage, indicating that innovative marketing practices, opportunity recognition, adaptability, and customer-oriented strategies help MSMEs strengthen their market position in highly competitive environments. Operational capability was also found to have a stronger positive and significant influence on competitive advantage, suggesting that operational efficiency, service consistency, and effective resource management are critical factors in sustaining business competitiveness.

Furthermore, this study confirms that entrepreneurial marketing and operational capability simultaneously influence competitive advantage. This finding highlights that sustainable competitiveness among coffee shop MSMEs cannot rely solely on marketing creativity or operational efficiency independently, but rather on the integration of both strategic capabilities. From a theoretical perspective, the study strengthens the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities Theory by showing that competitive advantage in MSMEs is built through the development and integration of valuable, adaptive, and difficult-to-imitate organizational capabilities.

In practice, this research has implications for MSME owners and policymakers. Coffee shop MSMEs need to strengthen digital marketing, innovation, customer engagement, and operational management simultaneously to survive in increasingly saturated markets. Government institutions and MSME development agencies are also encouraged to design training programs that integrate entrepreneurial marketing competencies with the development of operational capabilities.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research used a relatively small sample of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or regions. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, meaning the data were collected at a single point in time. As a result, the study cannot fully capture changes in entrepreneurial marketing, operational capabilities, and competitive advantage over time. Future research is recommended to use larger, more diverse samples and longitudinal approaches better to understand the dynamic development of MSME competitive advantage. Additionally, future studies may incorporate other strategic variables such as digital capability, innovation performance, customer experience, or business resilience to enrich the conceptual model.

## Implications

The results of this study indicate that Entrepreneurial Marketing and Operational Capabilities are strategic factors in enhancing the competitive advantage of coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the notion that a marketing approach grounded in innovation, creativity, and opportunity exploitation can create value for consumers. Furthermore, strong operational capabilities are shown to have a greater influence, thereby confirming that process efficiency, product quality, and operational management are the main keys to maintaining competitiveness. In practice, these results show that MSMEs cannot simply focus on marketing; they must also balance it with strengthening operational systems to compete sustainably.

## Recommendation

Based on the research findings, coffee shop MSMEs in Bekasi City should prioritize improving operational capabilities because this variable has the strongest influence on competitive advantage (0.733). MSME owners are advised to establish clear operational standards, improve service quality, maintain product consistency, and increase process efficiency. The use of digital systems, such as cashier applications, online ordering, and inventory management, is also recommended to support faster, more accurate operations.

In addition, MSMEs should continue strengthening entrepreneurial marketing through product innovation, social media promotion, and customer engagement strategies. Government and related institutions are also expected to provide practical training and business mentoring, especially in operational management and digital business development, to support sustainable MSME competitiveness.

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